

Frequently Asked Questions

UOC

Universitat Oberta
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1. What is the Practicum of the Master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching?

The Practicum of the master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching aims to establish bridges between the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired in the academic field and those built in the professional field. It therefore represents a fundamental axis for achieving the skills that define the teaching profession.

The Practicum is taken in parallel with the other courses that make up the training path, with the aim that students can contrast the reflective processes of observation, analysis and experimentation of the professional activity with the theoretical and practical training offered by the university.

The Practicum of the master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching consists of 14 ECTS, which for students means, a total dedication of 350 hours: 250 are face-to-face attendance at the educational institutions and 100 are the work carried out in the virtual classroom. The Practicum takes place **throughout an academic year** in a Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) or vocational training center or in an official language school (EOI). According to the planning, the practical training period at the educational institution lasts **approximately five months (between November and April)**. Students join the educational institution during the first quarter of the year and complete their practical training approximately one month before the end of the academic year.

The 250 hours of attendance at the educational institution are structured in three distinct phases (observation, accompanied intervention and independent intervention), which are distributed throughout the practical training period. The practical training must be done continuously and it must be taken into account that the hours dedicated to the practical training cannot be condensed.

2. What is the vehicular language of the Practicum as a course?

The language of instruction in the master's courses of Secondary and High School Teacher Training, Vocational training and Language Teaching taught at the UOC is Catalan. According to Order EDU/39/2021, of February 16, which establishes the development of university professionalization practices and other training institutions in educational institutions, educational services and departments of the Department of Education, sets the procedure for the selection and accreditation of training centers: "Catalan, as Catalonia's own language, is the language normally used as language of instruction and learning language for carrying out professional practices in training centers". The specific courses in English and Spanish Language and Literature are instructed in their respective languages.

3. Can I do the practical training in an educational institution outside Catalonia?

No, the practical training of the different specialties of the master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational training and Language Teaching taught by the universities of the university system of Catalonia in a coordinated manner within the framework of the Inter-university Council of Catalonia are carried out in public or private educational institutions in Catalonia, accredited as training centers.

4. When can I do the practical training at the secondary education and baccalaureate institution, vocational training or language school?

Depending on the enrolment and whether you have chosen to do the master's in one or two years, you must do the practical training at different times:

- a) If you complete the master's degree in one year, you are required to undertake in-person practical training concurrently with the other courses in the program.
- b) If you are planning to complete the master's degree in two years, the in-person practical training must be completed during the second year.

5. What is the duration of the practical training?

Of the 14 ECTS credits pertaining to the Practicum course, 10 must be dedicated to the time spent at the educational institution. This is equivalent to 250 hours at a secondary education, baccalaureate, vocational training center or at an official language school (EOI).

These hours must be distributed, as indicated in the *Practicum guide for the master's degree in Secondary and High School Teacher Training, Vocational training and Language Teaching*, between the second half of November and the third week of April, approximately. It is very important to respect the minimum hours of dedication for each of the three phases of the practical training (observation, accompanied intervention and independent intervention).

6. If I am working at the time of enrolling in the master's degree, do I have to quit my job?

No, you can continue to work, but you must anticipate that you will have to combine your work with a dedication to 250 face-to-face hours of practical training. The organization of this time must be reflected in the work plan that you will have to design and program with the supervision of the teaching mentor of the educational institution and the professor of the Practicum course.

7. Can I do the master's practical training at the same educational institution where I work?

There is no legal impediment for you to do the practical training at the same educational institution where you work, but you must bear in mind that the regulations do not foresee the possibility that the practical training can be validated by working hours. In any case, the educational institution must be accredited as a training center and a person from the teaching team in your field must be available to mentor and accompany you throughout the practical training.

This means that if you do the practical training at the educational institution where you work, you will have to complete your working day, and outside of these hours, the 250 hours of practical training. They should be distributed in such a way that you do not exceed 24 hours per week at the educational institution. In practice, then, this means that you will have to agree on a complex and very intensive work plan.

8. Can I validate the master's practical training if I work in an accredited training center?

No, under no circumstances can work hours be validated for practical training, as is clearly stated in the *Guide for the Teaching Practicum of the Master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching* and as contained in the regulations of the Department of Education.

9. Can I do the practical training in the afternoon to make it compatible with another job or with family or personal responsibilities?

There is no impediment to doing the practical training in the afternoon, but there are very few training centers accredited by the Generalitat that offer classes during this time, resulting in a typically higher demand than the available supply of spots.

The assignment of practical training placements is determined by the availability of positions offered by the training centers to the university. As a result, the schedule at the educational institution cannot be chosen.

10. Am I free to choose the practical training center?

No, once the registration is done, the university guarantees a practical training center for each student. The first contact with the educational institution is therefore done by the university.

11. Can any secondary education and baccalaureate, vocational training or any language school host students during their practical training?

No, the educational institution that hosts the master's students must be a training center accredited by the Department of Education of the Generalitat de Catalunya, and this educational institution must have a person from the teaching team from the same specialty of the master's you are taking who can carry out the mentorship.

12. Can I choose the mentor of the educational institution where I will do the practical training?

No, the mentor of the educational institution who will monitor your practical training is designated by the educational institution itself, in accordance with the regulations of the Department of Education. The university, therefore, does not intervene in the assignment of the mentor.

13. Who are the main agents involved in the Practicum?

During the practical training, you will have access to different professors linked to the University or the practical training center. The functions performed by this faculty are the following:

- **Practicum professor (university practical training tutoring).** The person who teaches in the virtual classroom, an expert in the course content and someone who explains the work to be done throughout the course. They guide students in carrying out learning activities and with any help they need. They also maintain personalized contact both with the students and with the educational institution's mentors. In addition, they individually monitor students' activities and establish dynamics within

the virtual classroom, enabling the sharing of experiences gained during the practical training period.

- **Practicum course coordinators (Practicum coordination).** They are responsible for designing the training proposal for the course and for establishing the criteria and evaluation procedures. Likewise, they coordinate the teaching team that tutors the Practicum in the development of the teaching tasks, ensuring the proper functioning of the course in its academic dimension. In addition, they are part of the Practical Training Committee, and in charge of managing the relationships established between the three parties involved in the practical training: the university, the students, and the mentors at the educational institutions.
- **Mentors at the educational institution** The mentors guide students in the dynamics and activities they must carry out during their stay at the educational institutions. The educational institution's mentors generally have five functions:
 - Accommodating students within the framework of the practical training center.
 - Explaining the work that is done at the educational institution and its operation, all the while facilitating access to information and contact with the different professionals and users in order to enable the activities of the Practicum to be carried out.
 - Facilitating mobility within the educational institution, attendance at the various pedagogical meetings (staff meetings, teaching team meetings, department meetings, tutorials, interviews with families, etc.) and participation in the educational institution's activities.
 - Helping the students to focus correctly on the learning scenario in the context of the educational institution, to accompany and support them in their development.
 - At the end of the practical training period they will make an assessment of the work developed by the students.
- **Coordination of the practical training center.** This person is responsible for coordinating with the practical training centers in the respective territories and the practical training coordination at the institution. Additionally, they collaborate with individuals involved in innovation or research projects shared with the university, as applicable.

14. What do I have to do once I have been assigned the practical training center?

From this moment, you can contact the educational institution and start the face-to-face practical training on the day agreed on with the mentor who has been assigned to you.

15. When I attend the practical training center, will the teaching of the other courses stop?

No, the teaching of the other courses continues during the period of time in which you do the face-to-face practical training at the centre.

Thus, the Practicum course entails, in addition to attendance and face-to-face work at the educational institution, the monitoring and preparation of tasks in the UOC's virtual classroom.

16. What is the practical training agreement and how should it be managed?

The practical training agreement is the document that establishes the agreements between the university and the practical training center.

According to Order EDU/39/2021, of February 16, practical training in educational institutions in Catalonia must be done in training centers accredited by the Department of Education. Both the contact and the assignment must be carried out by the university, so students cannot contact the educational institutions directly. Places are allocated to students from the university's Practical Training Service.

The university must communicate with the coordinators of the educational institution's practical training, who must confirm the availability of the place and appoint a mentor to accompany and supervise the student's practical training. The university must inform students of the name of the assigned educational institution and the contact details of the reference person, since from this moment, students can contact the educational institution through the practical training coordinators or by contacting mentors directly. In this first contact, the student must specify with the practical training coordinators and the educational institution's mentors the starting date of the practical training and, subsequently, the work plan that they will have to develop during the different phases of the practical training.

The agreement is mandatory, and it is very important to sign it at the beginning of the practical training.

17. Can I unilaterally decide the practical training times that I will do at the educational institution that has been assigned to me?

No, you must agree on the practical training times together with the mentor, given that this person has a specific working schedule to which you must partially adapt.

The law states that, under no circumstances, may a 24-hour period at the educational institution per week be exceeded.

In any case, the time distribution must be reflected in the practical training work plan.

18. What is the practical training work plan and how should it be designed?

The practical training work plan includes the three practical training phases (observation, accompanied intervention and independent intervention), and consists of the distribution of 250 hours of stay at the educational institution from the end of November to the end of April (approximately five months) of **between 15 and 18 hours of weekly practice**.

The work plan must be agreed upon and defined with the educational institution's mentor, and must be given to the Practicum course professor at the university during the first weeks of the practical training. The specific dates for the delivery of the work plan are established in the schedule of the virtual classroom at the beginning of each academic year. Likewise, the Practicum course professor at the university is responsible for informing the students and mentors at the educational institution of these dates, and also for providing the model or template of the work plan that needs to be filled out.

In the *Guide for the Teaching Practicum of the Master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching* and in the course's teaching plan the tasks that must be carried out in each of the three phases of the practical training are specified.

19. What is the distribution of the work plan, in weeks and hours, that should be reflected in the schedule? How many weeks and how many hours should each phase last?

As explained in the *Guide for the Teaching Practicum of the Master's degree in Teacher Education for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching*, the 250 hours of practical training must be distributed as follows, starting from the moment the schedule is agreed upon from the second half of November:

- The observation: at least in 2 or 3 weeks (between 40 and 45 hours).
- The accompanied intervention: at least in 5 or 6 weeks (between 120 and 130 hours).
- The independent intervention: at least in 3 or 5 weeks (between 80 and 90 hours).

20. Can I count as practical training hours the observation or intervention in areas other than those of the specialty I am studying in the master's degree?

Yes, but as long as the proposal is consistent with the educational institution's educational project and serves to enrich your teaching practice. In no case should it be an option to be able to accumulate more practice hours and finish the time at the educational institution earlier.

Enrolment in classes of other specialties cannot exceed more than 20% of the practical hours.

21. How should the hours I spend at the educational institution be recorded?

The practical training hours can be recorded in the practical training work plan, and the mentor, in the final report, must certify that you have correctly followed the agreed schedules.

22. What happens if I or my mentor are on leave during the practical training period?

If you or your mentor are absent at any time during the practical training period, you must immediately inform the Practicum course professor. The university will handle each situation individually and provide you with instructions on the steps to follow in order to continue the work plan agreed at the beginning of the practical training period.

All the information about university internships in educational institutions is collected in this document:

https://documents.espai.educacio.gencat.cat/PC/GestioAcademica/Practiques_universitaries.pdf.